A 788

The Fruitful Wonder:

OR, A Strange

Relation from *Kingston* upon *Thames*.

OF

A Woman, who on *Thursday* and *Friday*, being the 5th. and 6th. days of this Instant *March*, $167\frac{3}{4}$.

VVAS

Delivered of Four Children at one Birth;

Viz. Three Sons and one Daughter, all born alive, lusty Children, and Perfect in every Part; which lived 24 Hours, and then dyed all much about the same time.

VVITH

Several Other Examples of

Numerous Births

From Credible Historians.

VVITH THE

PHYSICAL and *ASTROLOGICAL* Reasons for the same.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE

Fruitful Wonder:

OR,

A Strange Relation from *Kingston*, &c.

THat the first Riches of a Kingdom or Nation, is the Multitude of its Inhabitants, is a known Maxim in Politiques: whence several of the Wisest Legislators that Antiquity can boast of, have made it a principal business in their Edicts, to endeavour the propagation and encrease of humane kind: Inflicting several Mulcts and penalties on those wanton Libertines, who neglecting to inroll themselves at a convenient age under Hymens Banner, seem'd to take no care at all for posterity: and on the other side, Encouraged with Rewards and priviledges, those Laborious Husbandmen in Natures Vineyard, who Enrich'd their Country with a Numerous Off-spring.

Naſcitur Indigne, per quem non naſcitur alter,
Indigne vivit, per quem non vivit & alter.

Uſeleſs his life, and to no purpoſe ſpent,
By whom no Issue to the World is lent.

Upon this Account Sterility or Barenneſs hath in all Ages and Countries been eſteemed a Reproach, and Fruitfulneſs an Happineſs and Honour: Of which latter kind, Nature to ſhew that ſhe is not yet grown ſo weak and decripit, as ſome ſneaking *Doe-littles* to excuſe their own Impotency, would repreſent her, has juſt now given a very Pregnant Inſtance, in a perſon of very good Credit and Reputation, of *Kingſtone* upon *Thames*, in the County of *Surry*.

This Good Woman being lately with Child, found her ſelf exceeding heavy and cumberſom, and appeared bigger then ordinary, eſpecially when her Reckoning began to grow neer expiring: ſo that Neighbours began generally to imagine ſhe would bring Twins; nor were their Expectations herein fruſtrated, but ſurpaſſed.

For behold! On Thurſday the fifth of this Inſtant *March*, her appointed time approaching, ſhe is ſeized with thoſe terrible Child-bed-pangs, which *Eves* Tranſgreſſion has unhappily entail'd on all her Daughters. In which tormenting Throws ſhe continued all that day, and the next: In which ſpace of time, ſhe was [to the great admiration of all the Women preſent] delivered of no leſs than four Children, [to wit) three Sons and one Daughter, they being all born alive, of a handſome large ſize and proportion, and had all their Limbs compleat and

perfect,

perfect, nor was there any apparent cause to dispair of their Living, but they continued not long, for within four and twenty hours after such their respective births they were all snatcht away by Death, like early Flowers nipt in the Budd: passing, as it were, Post through this troublesom Stage of Mortality, from the Womb of their particular Parent, to that of our common Mother, the Earth.

The Woman, though much weakned with so hard and tedious a Labour, is like to do very well, but is much afflicted for the loss of her Children.

Aristotle (heretofore accounted the Philosophers Pope) whose Dictates pass'd for Infallible) tells us of VVomen in *Ægypt*, that usually brought five Children at a time, which both he and *Solinus* attribute to the fecundity of the River *Nilus*, whereof they used to Drink. And saith, that it was never known, that ever any was brought to Bed of more at once.

But herein we must crave leave to dissent from this great Secretary of Nature, Experience Evidencing the contrary, that some VVomen have had Seven at a Birth.

And the Learned *Eustathius* (an Author of sufficient judgement and credit) in his Notes upon *Homer*, asserts on his Veracity, That he knew a Noble Matron, who was at one birth Delivered of Nine Children in the absence of her Husband: but being a Person of Quality, and One in whom it seems Pride had overpowred Nature, and cruel fancy sway'd more than religious duty, she took a conceit that her Husband would slight her henceforwards, and that she should loose something of her Interest in his Affections by bringing forth such a Litter of Children; Hereupon she resolves to drown seven of them, and having given the Midwife a Bribe to look

up

up her Tongue, she chooses out two of her nine Children which she fancied best, and gave the rest to the Nurse to go drown them in a River in the Evening, who most barborously consented to do it: but just when she was come down to the River and was standing upon the Bride, ready to put the Savage design in Execution; Her Master the Father of the Children returning homewards from a journey hapened to ride by, who knowing the Nurse and being much concerned to hear the cries of so many Children (for she had all the seven Children in a Hand basket) she at first endeavored to put him off by pretending they were onely a parcel of Kitlings which she was going to destroy, but he being a great lover of Cats, would needs see them to save the prettyest, which she seeming strongly loath to admit, he at last by force compelled her to shew him, when to his amazement falling on her knees and begging his pardon, she produced seven of his own Children devoted for death by her wicked hands, if she had not been thus miraculously prevented, and withal told him the whole story, and the reasons that prompted his Wife to this unnatural intention. whereupon making her haste home, he put them out severally to Nurse immediately, & they all lived till they were grown to Maturity; but the Gentleman would never afterwards live or associate with his bloody inhumane Wife.

To this we might add a thousand the like strange Relations, if we had the unity to make ostentation of Reading, such as that *Erasmus* mentions in *Chiliade* of a Woman named *Combe* that dwelt in *Eubœa* that had a hundred children by one Husband.

Or that which *Ludovicus Vives* asserts himself to have seen, *viz.* A Countrey-man in *Spain* (a place and people none of the fruitfullest) whose Children whilst he was living

ving had peopled a Town of above one hundred dwelling houſes, and were ſpread ſo far that they had left off the Name of Relations, nor need this ſeem incredible, ſince there wa (within this twelve-months if not ſtill) a Woman living in *Lancaſhire*, that has often been heard truly and properly to ſay, *Do you hear daughter, run and tell your Grand-daughter that her Daughters Child cries.*

What ſhall we ſay of *Hieorim* King of *Arabia* whom *Juſtin* tells us had above ſix hundred natural Sons by ſeveral Concubines, of *Artaxerxes* who had a hundred and fifteen, or that luſty Roman *Bellſwagger*, *Proculus Cæſar*, who (as *Mizoldus* an eminent Phyſitian aſſures us) got more than one hundred Virgins with-child in the ſpace of fifteen days.

This is certain, *Auguſtus Cæſar* ſaw his Grand-daughters Grand-ſon, *M. Sillanus*, and one *Stetini* an *Italian* Lady, dying in the 87*th.* year of her age, beheld with her own eyes ſprung from her own body of Children and Grandchildren, &c. To the number of one hundred twenty and five. And the Illuſtrous *John Count Naſſaw* in the laſt age in like manner eighty and five perſons of his own and his Childrens begetting all alive at once before his death.

We might be tedious in ſuch inſtances ſince every Poſtiler and Breivary can furniſh us with ſuch pocket Learning: Theſe are more than enough to prove the matter of fact, and it might now perhaps be no more grateful and divertiſing to the Reader if we would leave the ſteril road of Hiſtory to take a walk or two in the more pleaſing Gardens of Philoſophy, inquiring how it comes to paſs that ſuch numerous births are produced; But theſe are *Arcana* Nature, not fit to be proſtituted in a Pamphlet, ſome Anatomiſts, & not a few Phyſitians have done it too much to our Hand, we ſhall conclude with an Aphoriſm of Aſtrology on this Theme,

Theme, from *Guido Bonatus, part. 2. Cap. 5.* VVhich we conceive very pertinent to our present Subject. *Vide si fuerit ascendens* Gemini, *aut* Virgo, Pisces, *vel* Sagitarius, *aut si duo boni planetæ fuerint in ascendente vel quinta, Concepit binos; si autem fuerit ibi cum eis Caput* Draconis, *dic quod pariet, vel utero plus quam duobus, & possibile est quod pariet quatuor.*

VVhen 'tis enquired how many children a VVoman goes with, see if *Gemini, Virgo, Pisces,* or *Sagitary* ascend, or if there be two good planets in the ascendant or 5th. house, then hath she conceived two, but if the Dragons head be there with them, say, she carries more than two, and that 'tis possible she may have Four.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

FINIS.